

# THE AUTHOR:

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## CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

A few days ago I had occasion to go to a little bookstore in Windsor, one of the country towns of Nova Scotia, and there, standing before one of the counters, wrapping and sealing up some books, stood a tall, athletic-looking man, not more than forty years of age. Behind the spectacles which he wears, you could see a pair of bright brown eyes, a strong face, with prominent features, crowned with a head of dark hair. Altogether he was a fine-looking man, but not handsome. It was the poet, Charles G. D. Roberts, or, as we in Nova Scotia more commonly speak of him, Professor Roberts.

All the members of the Roberts family are of a poetic turn of mind, but Charles has out-

stripped the others, and now is one of Canada's rising stars. Bliss Carmen, of the *New York Independent*, and he are cousins, and it is said the family claims relationship to Emerson, how near I know not.

At present King's College, of Windsor, the oldest chartered college in Canada, belonging to the Church of England, holds Roberts as professor of modern languages. He is president of the Haliburton Club of that institution, which is said to hold its meetings in the room occupied by Judge Haliburton when a student at King's.

For some time Professor Roberts has been writing both prose and poetry; and not long ago a small volume of poems, "In Divers Tones," appeared; and often in American magazines you will come across some of his writings. The books he was preparing to mail, when I saw him, were copies of a translation of his from the French, by Gaspé, called "The Canadians of Old," which is highly spoken of by the critics. At present Longmans, Green, & Co. have in their hands a volume of his for publication.

When the Canterbury Poets Series was to be published in London, Roberts was appointed one of the editors. He is, as his writings show, truly a Canadian. He writes of the dykes and marshes, as in "Tautramar," of the creeks and beaches, as in "The Creek," and of the ebb and flow of tides. Dr. Rand, of McMaster University, says of him: "He received much of his inspiration from his familiarity with the Greek poets; and some of his writings resemble those of Keats. The melody of Swinburne is apparent in his lines; and the influence of

Shelley can also be noticed. He is a master of sonnets, of which 'The Sower' is worthy to rank in English literature."

Many consider Roberts to be Canada's first poet, others think Carmen should hold that place, and, again, there are those who would that Archibald Lampman should receive the laurel wreath; but listen to what Matthew Richey Knight, editor of the *Canada*, says in his sonnet, "Our Poets":—

There, side by side, upon my desk they dwell :  
Roberts, whose touch makes beautiful ; and he,  
Carmen, who sees and loves all mystery ;  
And Lampman, Fantasy's son ; Duvar, whose spell  
Is like the choir of birds. I cannot tell  
Which I love best ; in his own light I see  
Each, and for his own charm he pleaseth me ;  
I love none best, I love them all so well.

Which shall be first ? I am not skilled to place  
Each in his rank ; but why should any lead ?  
Each has his several note, his several grace ;  
Faithful to that, he earns the proper meed.  
If with no mask he covers his own face,  
His rank is absolute to all who read.

*Sidonie Zilla.*

NOVA SCOTIA.

#### A PLEA FOR THE VILLAGE LIBRARY.

We New Englanders are beginning to realize the importance of the public library as a factor in the forming of habit, and life, and character. Of this the recent rapid increase in the number of libraries is a most encouraging proof.

A smart little village, of which I have the good fortune to be a foster-child, has recently received a handsome gift for a library; a sum sufficient to enable it to purchase land, building, and books, and to secure the services of a competent librarian.

Encouraged by this generosity, I feel moved to make an earnest appeal in behalf of every writer and reader, and thinker in New England. Let us all do what we can in aid of the library movement. Let each help his own town. Let us unswervingly advocate the good cause, until each town shall possess its library, large or small, as the case may be.

"Every town," says Richardson in his admirable "Choice of Books," "ought to have a library containing as many volumes as the town has inhabitants. Such a library becomes at once the centre of the intellectual life of the

town, and affects the morals and manners of the entire community. And more: its influence stretches out into the whole country, wherever its readers may chance to go; and its importance is not for a moment to be compared with the entire sum of the mercantile and manufacturing interests by which it is surrounded. A town with a library can be distinguished easily from one which lacks any such collection of books; and those parts of the country in which town libraries abound are the parts which are most influential in every department of intellectual, and even material, labor."

To those of us who for the greater part of the year are stalled within the narrow confines of a sequestered village or dapper little town the library is indispensable.

What comfort it is when actually "snow bound," like Whittier's good family, to have the companionship of the delightful guests to whom our library introduces us. How eagerly we look forward, month after month, to the arrival of the great magazines. The *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, the *Century*, *Scribner's*, the *Independent*, *THE WRITER*, the *Literary World*, the *Critic*—what wholly delightful and helpful guests are these ! The day of their arrival is a fête day in our cloister-like community.

In this manner, through book and magazine, do gracious guests come to us: while we, the enchanted hosts, do not entertain, but are ourselves entertained. Beneath our humble roof-tree we may shelter the noblest of the earth. Seated at our own fireside, we may set forth on Fancy's wing and go around the world, not by "The old Marlboro' Road," but by a route equally fascinating.

The library is, by all odds, the most valuable property a town can possess.

Who of us, then, faithful, loyal New Englanders, would not do our level best toward the establishing of these wholesome institutions ? Let us be brave and brotherly. Let each do what he can. Let us stand sturdily shoulder to shoulder in aid of this movement, until each New England town and hamlet rejoices in its library. Let us but make a beginning, be it never so small and puny. Once started, the ball *will* roll. The meagre nucleus of one book,

perhaps, or a dozen, will, in a wonderfully brief space of time, develop into a useful library.

The majority of us country folk—butchers, bakers, candle-stick makers, and what not—cannot, perhaps, give much money, not being burdened with this world's goods. But to all is it possible to give something. I believe, with Emerson, that our gifts are too often expressionless. I believe that each should give a part of himself; that the giving should signify, should have character, and embody the personality of the giver. Let the poet give a poem, the artist a picture, the jeweller a jewel, the farmer a bushel of potatoes, the fisherman a fish, the stevedore coals. Let us bravely give the best that is within us. Let us, being Yankees, give our wits. Let each do his honest share toward raising the standard of our knowledge and culture, till New England shall blossom with libraries, and each town, and village, and hamlet shall know a rarer and sweeter atmosphere, even as to-day our fair hillsides and winding wood-ways are redolent of arbutus, and sweet-brier, and bayberry, of pine, and hemlock, and spruce, and fir.

William Hale.

Dover, N. H.

#### THE SCIENCE OF FICTION.

Since art is science with an addition, since some science underlies all art, there is seemingly no paradox in the use of such a phrase as "the science of fiction."

One concludes it to mean that comprehensive and accurate knowledge of realities which must be sought for, or intuitively possessed to some extent, before anything deserving the name of an artistic performance in narrative can be produced.

The particulars of this science are the generalities of all others. The materials of fiction being human nature and circumstances, the science thereof may be dignified by calling it the codified law of things as they really are. No single pen can treat of this exhaustively. The science of fiction is contained in that large work, the cyclopaedia of life.

In no proper sense can the term "science" be applied to other than this fundamental matter. It can have no part or share in the construction of a story, however recent speculations may have tended toward such an application. We may assume with certainty that directly the constructive stage is entered upon, art—high or low—begins to exist.

The most devoted apostle of realism, the sheerest naturalist, cannot escape, any more than the withered old gossip over her fire, the exercise of art in his labor or pleasure of telling a tale. Not until he becomes an automatic register of all impressions, without regard to their bearings, can he be called purely scientific, or even a manufacturer on scientific principles. Then, too, if in the exercise of his reason he select or omit, with an eye to being more truthful than truth (the just aim of art), he transforms himself into a technician at a move.

As this theory of the need for the exercise of the Dædalian faculty for selection and cunning manipulation has been disputed, it may be worth while to examine the contrary proposition. That it should ever have been maintained by such a romancer as M. Zola in his work on the "Roman Experimental" seems to reveal an obtuseness to the disproof conveyed in his own novels, which, in a French writer, is singular indeed.

To be sure, that author—whose powers in story telling, rightfully and wrongfully exercised, may be partly owing to the fact that he is not a critic—does in a measure concede something in the qualified counsel that the novel should keep as close to reality as it can—a remark which may be interpreted with infinite latitude, and would no doubt have been cheerfully accepted by Dumas père or Mrs. Radcliffe. It implies discriminative choice, and if we grant that, we grant all. But to maintain in theory what he abandons in practice, to subscribe to rules and to work by instinct, is a proceeding not confined to the author of "Germinal" and "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret."

The reasons that make against such conformation of story writing to scientific processes have been set forth so many times in examining the theories of the realist that it is not necessary to recapitulate them here. Admitting the desirability, the impossibility, of reproducing in its entirety the phantasmagoria of experience, infinitude of atomic truth, without shadow, relevancy, or subordination, is not the least of them. The fallacy appears to owe its origin to the just perception that with our widening knowledge of the universe and its forces, and man's position therein, narrative, to be artistically convincing, must adjust itself to the new alignment, as would also artistic works in form and color if further spectacles in their sphere could be presented. Nothing but the illusion of truth can permanently please, and when the old illusions begin to be penetrated a more natural magic has to be supplied.

Creativeness in its full and ancient sense—the making a thing or situation out of nothing that

ever was before—is apparently ceasing to satisfy a world,—or at least its van couriers,—which no longer believes in the abnormal, and creative fancy has accordingly to give more and more place to realism—that is, to an artificiality distilled from the closest similitudes.

This is the meaning deducible from the work of the realists, however they themselves may define realism in terms. Realism is an unfortunate, an ambiguous word, which has been assumed in one place to mean copyism and in another prurience, and has led to two classes of delineators being included in one condemnation.

Just as bad a word is one used to express a feature in this development—namely, “brutality,” a term which, first applied by French critics, has since spread over the English schools of criticism like rash. It aptly hits off the immediate impression of the thing meant, but it has the disadvantage of defining impartiality as a passion, and a plan as a caprice. It certainly is very far from truly expressing the aims and methods of conscientious and well intentioned authors, who, notwithstanding their excesses, errors, and absurd theories, attempt to narrate the *verité vraie*.

To return for a moment to the theories of the scientific realists. Every friend to the novel should and must be in sympathy with their error, even while distinctly perceiving it. Though not true, it is well found. To advance realism as complete copyism, to call the idle trade of story-telling a science, is the hyperbolic flight of an admirable enthusiasm, the exaggerated cry of an honest reaction from the false, in which the truth has been impetuously approached and overleaped in fault of lighted on.

Possibly, if we only wait, the third something, akin to perfection, will take up its post on its due pedestal. How that third something may be induced to hasten its pace, who shall say? Hardly the English critic.

But this appertains to the art of novel-writing, and is outside the immediate subject. To return to the “science.”

Yet what is the use? Its very comprehensiveness renders the attempt to dwell upon it a futility. Being an observational responsiveness to everything within the cycle of the suns that has to do with actual life, it is easier to say what it is not than to categorize its *summa genera*. It is not, for example, the paying of a great regard to adventitious externals to the neglect of vital qualities, a precision about the outside of the platter and an obtuseness to the contents.

A sight for the finer qualities of existence, an

ear for the “still, sad music of humanity,” are no to be acquired by the surface senses alone, close as the powers in photography may be.

What cannot be discerned by eye and ear, what may be apprehended only by the mental tactility that comes from a sympathetic appreciativeness of life in all its manifestations, this is the gift which renders its possessor a more accurate delineator of human nature than many another with twice his powers and means of external observation, but without that sympathy.

To see in half and quarter views the whole picture, to catch from a few bars the whole tune, is the intuitive power that supplies the would-be story writer with the scientific bases for his pursuit. He may not count the dishes at a feast, or accurately estimate the value of the jewels in a lady's diadem; but through the smoke of those dishes and the rays from these jewels he sees eternally, written on the wall:—

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

Thus, as aforesaid, an attempt to set forth the science of fiction in calculable pages is futility; it is to write a whole library of human philosophy with instructions how to feel.

Once in a crowd a listener heard a needy and illiterate woman saying of another poor and haggard woman who had lost her little son years before: “You can see the ghost of that child in her face even now.”

That speaker was one who, though she could probably neither read nor write, had the true means toward the “science” of fiction innate within her; a power of observation informed by a living heart. Had she been trained in the technicalities, she might have held the mirror up to nature with good effect; a reflection which leads to a conjecture that, perhaps, true novelists, like poets, are born, not made.—*Thomas Hardy, in the New York Herald.*

#### HOW ONE SERIAL WRITER WORKS.

I had an interesting conversation recently with a popular writer of serial stories for the weekly papers, and he gave me a description of his method of working, which revealed more forcibly than ever that literature is often only a trade, and a very mechanical one at that.

“As soon as I have made arrangements for a serial story,” he said, “I sit down and sketch out the main plot. Then, if ten instalments are wanted, I divide my plot into ten parts, and each of these

parts into three chapters, naming the chapters in advance. This serves me for a chart, which I carry with me constantly. I also keep a small ledger, in which I enter the name of every new character as soon as I create him. I have found this necessary, for I never think of my story until Friday night of each week, and am apt, therefore, to forget the name of one of my characters after I have sent my former week's instalment to the printers. Experience has taught me that this chart and ledger system is very useful. On Friday night I take out my chart, look up the situation, and see what is to be told next; then I set to work making my characters talk and act as naturally as I know how until I have nearly completed my instalment. Then I devise some little incident that will carry the interest over to my next instalment, and split the incident in half with a 'To be continued.' Then I send my matter to the printers, and think no more about it until the following week. In this way I carry sometimes three serials, devoting an evening a week to each until finished."

"Of all that you have written, what have you taken the most enjoyment in?" I asked.

"The words I have taken the most pleasure in writing are those constituting the brief sentence, 'To be continued,' which ends my instalments," answered the author, with a quiet smile. — *Edward W. Bok, in the Philadelphia Times.*

#### TYPEWRITER OR PEN?

Quite a good deal of excitement has been caused of late in the literary and journalistic worlds by the decree sent forth from one of the largest receivers of manuscripts in the metropolis, to the effect that only typewritten copy would be read, all other to be returned without inspection.

A band of editors who make up the big daily papers recently gathered together to discuss the matter, but from varying opinions were not able to come to any definite conclusion as to the general adoption of this rule.

"Typewritten copy is much the easier to edit," said Mr. George Spinney, of the *New York Times*. "There is always more room between the lines and more space between the letters. Besides, one can get a better idea of how a piece of news is going to look in a newspaper by seeing it in type, for faults never look so prominent in writing."

Ballard Smith, the managing editor of the *World*, is known to be much in favor of typewritten copy. "Why," said he, "typewritten copy is the only per-

fect copy to have, but, at the same time, no paper can afford to deal with this alone, especially a daily. The weeklies and monthlies can cling to this idea of accepting only typewritten copy with more tenacity than can the dailies from the lack of time given for the preparation of the news and wide diversification and scope of the subjects."

"All our gilt-edged copy comes to us in the author's own handwriting," said Mr. Richard Watson Gilder of the *Century Magazine*, "but I much prefer the typewritten, for my part. It is better for the eyes and more pacifying to the nerves. Many of our contributors are heroes in the work, and it would never do for us to demand their manuscripts in type. Most young writers send typewritten contributions. They seem to have caught the right idea about the troubles and trials of the manuscript readers in deciphering the illegible chirography of the modern author."

"I like the copy from the typewriter," said Editor Bowers, of the *Tribune*, "on account of its plainness, but, unfortunately, I do not handle much of it. I wish I did, as it saves time for the editor and compositor as well. If the typewriter had been invented in Horace Greeley's time, no doubt it would have prolonged the lives of a good many compositors on this sheet."

"I have used the typewritten copy for a good many years now. I guess I was one of the pioneers in this movement of progress," said Joe Howard, Jr., the ubiquitous and omnipresent Gotham correspondent. "It saves time, and time is money."

Mr. Carrington, one of the editors of *Scribner's Magazine*, was asked the question, "If the author wrote a thoroughly legible hand and made clean copy, would it not be just as acceptable to the editorial eye as a typewritten manuscript?"

"No," he replied. "Typewritten manuscript is by far the most acceptable. Still there is nothing prettier to me than the fine old Italian hand in vogue among the old authors. It is getting to be more and more the custom of literary people to either typewrite their own manuscript or dictate to a secretary."

"Well, you know the difference," said John C. Reed, managing editor of the *Recorder*, "that exists between an article written and the same article in cold, hard type. There are some harsh things that get into papers now-a-days which would never get there if all the copy was typewritten instead of penned."

S. W. Foss, editor of the *Yankee Blade* and the *New England Magazine*, prefers the manuscript written. He says any manuscript dictated to, or

composed on, the typewriter comes out more or less incomplete in phraseology, thought, and action. Professional writers are not noted as speakers, therefore they cannot interpret their thoughts and ideas to a second party to the best advantage."

Edgar Saltus, the well-known novelist, dictates to a secretary, who has become so thoroughly conversant with his mannerisms that there is perfect harmony between them, and he finds it fully as satisfactory as manufacturing his own copy.

Mary Mapes Dodge, the editor of *St. Nicholas*, refuses to accept anything but typewritten copy. She claims that the rule is proving so satisfactory that she has no desire to go back to the old system.

"Jennie June" (Mrs. Croly), editor of the *Home-maker*, writes a fine, legible hand, and is a great admirer of personalities in chiography. She tried a typewriter once, but the mechanical noise created by the machine intruded upon her thoughts to such an extent that she immediately rejoined the ranks of the good old-fashioned persons who indite their own thoughts.

Robert Louis Stevenson writes his own copy and corrects it himself. He thinks he can color his own thoughts better by pen and ink. He says that by dictation an expression loses its forcibleness.

An English correspondent says: "I ran across young Kipling early in the afternoon at the Savage Club; he was scribbling away like mad. I watched his fingers vibrate, and the veins grow larger and fuller as his pen ran quickly across the page. He seemed to infuse some of the physical exhilaration into the expressions he was consigning to paper. I asked him if he always wrote so quickly. He replied in the affirmative. 'I write when the idea comes. I cannot dictate. I must have the aid of pen and paper to express my thoughts.'

Amélie Rives writes all her own manuscript. The sheets of "The Quick or the Dead" were hardly dry when they were handed in at Lippincott's.

Tom Masson, a well-known writer of humorous verse, asked the editors of *Life*, *Sun*, *Harper's Bazar*, and *Judge* whether they would prefer his copy typewritten. They each assured him that his work was just as acceptable in his own writing.

A. Schade Van Westrum, the editor of *Book Chat*, thinks that composing one's thoughts on the typewriter promotes correctness of spelling, terseness in phraseology, and impedes tautological statements, which mar artistic writing.

Kate Field has so much to do in the editorial direction of her own weekly, much of whose pages

emanate from her own active mind, that she is obliged to adopt an ingenious device to utilize every moment of her time. Some time ago she inspected Edison's phonograph for the first time and became interested in its workings. Finding that she had not time enough to do all her writing and to attend to her executive duties, she hired a phonograph, and now, when she feels in the mood, she talks into it. In this way her private secretary is kept busy transferring the words of the phonograph to the machine while Miss Field is engaged in her other duties, thus reducing her lost time to a minimum.

Mrs. John Sherwood dictates to her stenographer a syndicate letter in an hour. She prefers the typewriter for swiftness and clearness, and deems it necessary for the saving of labor that editors or receivers of manuscripts should oblige contributors to send in typewritten manuscripts.

The typewriter is purely an American invention, and since its birth has secured a strong hold in the business and professional world. Its uses, once devoted to the merchant, the broker, and the lawyer, are widened to a larger scope, so that it has now become almost indispensable to the majority of the workers in the literary world. Its sterling merits have not yet crept across the ocean, and in European literary circles it is looked upon with disfavor, and is very seldom used.—*Margaret Hamm, in the Syracuse Herald.*

#### FICTION AND DOMESTIC MISERY.

The novel of to-day, compared with its predecessor of even a decade, shows what great changes have taken place in thought and practice. Greater changes still are indicated, the tendency of which is to develop in woman hitherto unknown or unused powers of mind; but judging from representative fiction, these new endowments do not increase her happiness. The modern heroine may be compared to Joan of Arc. She sees visions and dreams dreams, and listens to strange and sometimes heavenly voices, and is more successful as leader, saint, and martyr than in the commonplace avocation of a wife.

As we read, we ask two questions: first, does the novel of to-day fairly represent the great number of loyal, happy wives who "thank Heaven, fasting, for a good man's love," and are not afraid of wasted affection, realizing that no one can attain to anything greater than love? We wonder, too, how much literature of a certain class is responsible for the very evils it now, in some instances, lashes so

vigorously? Charles Lamb says that "the next thing to making a child an infidel is letting him know that there are infidels at all."

Is not much domestic unhappiness the result of suggestion on the part of some writers of fiction? The passionate love story; the deification of sudden romantic attachment; the advocating of unequal, improvident marriages; the bringing forward of the hysterical, selfish woman as an attractive type of character; and the insidious justification of the wrong-doer, be it husband or wife,—may not these have formed part of the first cause, the effect of which is the danger which threatens the home?

Jules Simon in the *Revue de Famille* makes a strong appeal to dramatists and novelists to assist in promoting sound and sensible ideas regarding the relations of the sexes. He would have them turn from the psychology of the passions to the study of moral obligation.

An appeal might also be made to women, the readers of the world, to suffer no book to cross the threshold of the home which is not clean and wholesome in its teaching.—*Helen Jay, in Harper's Bazar.*

#### BREVITY IN FICTION.

The interminable novel belongs to ages less crowded and more leisurely than ours. Our ancestors of two hundred years ago could enjoy those impossible folio romances, as unreadable now as the Bodies of Divinity, with which they shared the field; and after a less monstrous bulk superseded the folios, "Clarissa Harlowe" could lure weeping admirers through eight volumes, and "Evelina" enchain attention through five. But when stage coaches gave way to steam, the mind learned to travel as rapidly as the body. The three-volume novel still lingers in England, a sad survival, by grace of Mudie. When the circulating library gives forth its long-delayed fiat, this cumbersome form will give way to American compactness. Half a century back, all our fiction, alike the reprints of Scott and Bulwer, and the originals of Cooper, Paulding, and Simms, appeared in two thinnish volumes; but for a generation or more the demand has been for that which can be held complete in the hand, if not carried in the pocket. Even the double-columned octavo practically ended with the war. The thin paper quarto, which can be rolled up in transit and tossed aside after perusal, has lost its pre-eminence of ten or fifteen years ago. For preservation, or even for sale at book stalls and on

the cars, the notable class of "12mo et infra" carries all before it. A solitary house, which deals solely in translations, still affects the two-volume form in careful moderation; but two volumes are usually held one too many for contemporary fiction.

In the first place, life no longer lazily drags one foot after the other, but moves on wheels at from five to fifty miles an hour. To a dozen books-worth reading in Scott's time there are a hundred now. Where a few topics demanded attention, a multitude are now knocking at our doors. Before this flood of inventions, and improvements, and contrivances came in, a single pursuit might engross one's energies; but the modern man must be Argus-eyed,—his brain is no longer a private house, but a hotel. The new order may not be wholly welcome or beneficent, but it has arrived, and apparently to stay. We are driven at this breakneck pace, whether we will or no; and whoever has anything to say to us by way of instruction or entertainment must know how to say it in compact and business-like fashion, for we can give him only a modicum of our precious time. Even if it be Meredith or Stevenson, other men and other books also must have their chance.—*Frederic M. Bird, in Lippincott's Magazine.*

#### LITERARY CRITICISM.

If literary criticism may be said to flourish among us at all, it certainly flourishes immensely, for it flows through the periodical press like a river that has burst its dykes. The quantity of it is prodigious, and it is a commodity of which, however the demand may be estimated, the supply will be sure to be, in any supposable extremity, the last thing to fail us. What strikes the observer above all, in such an affluence, is the unexpected proportion the discourse uttered bears to the objects discoursed of—the paucity of examples, of illustrations and productions, and the deluge of doctrine, suspended in the void, the profusion of talk, and the poverty of experiment, of what one may call literary conduct.

This, indeed, ceases to be an anomaly as soon as we look at the conditions of contemporary journalism. Then we see that these conditions have engendered the practice of "reviewing"—a practice that, in general, has nothing in common with the art of criticism. Periodical literature is a huge open mouth which has to be fed—a vessel of immense capacity which has to be filled. It is like a regular train which starts at an advertised hour,

but which is free to start only if every seat be occupied. The seats are many, the train is ponderously long, and hence the manufacture of dummies for the seasons when there are not passengers enough. A stuffed manikin is thrust into the empty seat, where it makes a creditable figure till the end of the journey. It looks sufficiently like a passenger, and you know it is not only when you perceive that it neither says anything nor gets out. The guard attends to it when the train is shunted, blows the cinders from its wooden face, and gives a different crook to its elbow, so that it may serve for another run.

In this way, in a well-conducted periodical, the blocks of *remplissage* are the dummies of criticism — the recurrent, regulated billows in the ocean of talk. They have a reason for being, and the situation is simpler when we perceive it. It helps to explain the disproportion I just mentioned, as well, in many a case, as the quality of the particular discourse. It helps us to understand that the "organs of public opinion" must be no less copious than punctual, that publicity must maintain its high standard, that ladies and gentlemen may turn an honest penny by the free expenditure of ink. It gives us a glimpse of the high figure presumably reached by all the honest pennies accumulated in the cause, and throws us quite into a glow over the march of civilization and the way we have organized our conveniences. From this point of view, it might indeed go far toward making us enthusiastic about our age. What is more calculated to inspire us with a just complacency than the sight of a new and flourishing industry, a fine economy of production? The great business of reviewing has, in its roaring routine, many of the signs of blooming health, many of the features which beguile one into rendering an involuntary homage to successful enterprise.

Yet it is not to be denied that certain captious persons are to be met who are not carried away by the spectacle, who look at it much askance, who see but dimly whither it tends, and who find no aid to vision even in the great light (about itself, its spirit, and its purposes, among other things) that it might have been expected to diffuse. "Is there any such great light at all?" we may imagine the most restless of the sceptics to inquire, "and is n't the effect rather one of a certain kind of pretentious and unprofitable gloom?" The vulgarity, the crudity, the stupidity, which this cherished combination of the off-hand review and of our wonderful system of publicity have put into circulation on so vast a scale may be represented in such a mood as

an unprecedented invention for darkening counsel.

The bewildered spirit may ask itself, without speedy answer: What is the function in the life of a man of such a reverberation of platitudes and irrelevance? Such a spirit will wonder how the life of man survives it, and above all, what is much more important, how literature resists it; whether, indeed, literature does resist it, and is not speedily going down beneath it. The signs of this catastrophe will not, in the case we suppose, be found too subtle to be pointed out — the failure of distinction, the failure of style, the failure of knowledge, the failure of thought. The case is, therefore, one for recognizing with dismay that we are paying a tremendous price for the diffusion of penmanship and opportunity, that the multiplication of endowments for chatter may be as fatal as an infectious disease, that literature lives essentially, in the sacred depths of its being, upon example, upon perfection wrought, that, like other sensitive organisms, it is highly susceptible of demoralization, and that nothing is better addressed than irresponsible pedagogy to making it lose faith in itself. To talk about it clumsily is to poison the air it breathes, and the consequence of that sort of taint is that it dwindles and dies. We may, of course, continue to talk about it long after it is dead, and there is every appearance that this is mainly the way in which our descendants will hear of it; not perhaps that they will much regret its departure, with our report to go by.

This, I am aware, is a dismal impression, and I do not pretend to state the case gaily. The most I can say is that there are times and places in which it strikes one as less desperate than at others. One of the places is Paris, and one of the times is some comfortable occasion of being there. The custom of rough and ready reviewing is, among the French, much less rooted than with us, and the dignity of criticism is, to my perception, in consequence much higher. The art is felt to be one of the most difficult, the most delicate, the most occasional, and the material on which it is exercised is subject to selection, to restriction. That is, whether or no the French are always right as to what they do notice, they strike me as infallible as to what they don't. They publish hundreds of books which are never noticed at all, and yet they are much neater bookmakers than we. It is recognized that such volumes have nothing to say to the critical sense, that they do not belong to literature, and the possession of the critical sense is exactly what makes it impossible to read them and dreary to discuss them — places them, as part of critical experience,

out of the question. The critical sense, in France, *ne se dérange pas*, as the phrase is, for so little.

No one would deny, on the other hand, that when it does set itself in motion, it goes further than with us. It handles the subject, in general, with finer finger tips. The bluntness of ours, as tactile implements addressed to an exquisite process, is still sometimes surprising, even after frequent exhibition. For an exquisite process, in literature, it surely is the critical; and that is precisely why the rough commercial appraisal into which we have vulgarized it raises such injurious presumptions. It is impossible not to be suspicious of criticism that is administered stertorously, and with bucket and curry-comb, like the grooming of a horse; or with a consciousness of the rarity of the critical sense, to accept the miracle of its being crumbed up and dealt all around. We blunder in and out of the affair as if it were a railway station — the easiest and most public of the arts. It is in reality the most complicated and the most particular. The critical sense is so far from frequent that it is absolutely rare, and that the possession of the cluster of qualities that minister to it is one of the highest distinctions. It is a gift inestimably precious and beautiful; therefore, so far from thinking that it passes overmuch from hand to hand, one knows that one has only to stand by the counter an hour to see that business is done with baser coin.

We have too many small school matters, yet not only do I not question in literature the high utility of criticism, but I should be tempted to say that the part it plays may be the supremely beneficent one when it proceeds from deep sources, from the efficient combination of experience and perception. In this light one sees the critic as the real helper of mankind, a torch-bearing outrider, the interpreter *par excellence*. The more we have of such the better, though there will surely always be obstacles enough to our having many. When one thinks of the outfit required for fine work in this spirit, one is ready to pay almost any homage to the intelligence that has put it on; and when one considers the noble figure completely equipped, — armed *cap-à-pie* in curiosity and sympathy, — one falls in love with one's conception. It certainly represents the knight who has knelt through his long vigil and who has the piety of his office. For there is something sacrificial in his function, inasmuch as he offers himself as a general touchstone. To lend himself, to project himself and steep himself, to feel and feel till he understands, and to understand so well that he can say, to have perception at the pitch of passion and expression in the form of talent, to be infinitely

curious and incorrigibly patient, with the intensely fixed idea of turning character, and genius, and history inside out, — these are ideas to give an active mind a high programme, and to add the element of artistic beauty to the conception of success. Just in proportion as he is sentient and restless, just in proportion as he vibrates with intellectual experience, is the critic a valuable instrument; for in literature, assuredly, criticism is the critic, just as art is the artist; it being assuredly the artist who invented art and the critic who invented criticism, and not the other way round.

And it is with the kinds of criticism exactly as it is with the kinds of art — the best kind, the only kind worth speaking of, is the kind that the most living spirit gives us. There are a hundred labels and tickets, in all this matter, that have been pasted on from the outside, and appear to exist for the convenience of passers-by; but the critic who lives in the house, ranging through its innumerable chambers, knows nothing about the bills on the front. He only knows that the more impressions he has, the more he is able to record, and that the more he is saturated, poor fellow, the more he can give out. His life, at this rate, is heroic, for it is immensely vicarious. He has to understand for others and to interpret, and he is always under arms. He knows that the whole honor of the matter, for him, besides the success in his own eyes, depends upon his being indefatigably supple, and that is a formidable order.

Let me not speak, however, as if his work were a conscious grind, for the sense of effort is easily lost in the enthusiasm of curiosity. Any vocation has its hours of intensity that is so closely connected with life. That of the critic, in literature, is connected doubly, for he deals with life at second-hand as well as at first; that is, he deals with the experience of others, which he resolves into his own, and not of those invented and selected others with whom the novelist makes comfortable terms, but with the uncompromising swarm of authors, the clamorous children of history. He has to make them as vivid and as free as the novelist makes his puppets, and yet he has, as the phrase is, to take them as they come. We must be easy with him if the picture, even when the aim has really been to penetrate, is sometimes confused, for there are baffling and there are thankless subjects; and we compensate him, in the peculiar purity of our esteem, when the portrait is really, as it were, like the happy portraits of the other art, a translation into style. — *Henry James, in the Philadelphia Press.*

## THE AUTHOR.

WM. H. HILLS, . . . EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

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Short practical articles on topics connected with literary work are always wanted for THE WRITER and THE AUTHOR.

The publisher of THE AUTHOR will send, postpaid, to any address any book or periodical that may be desired, on receipt of the publisher's advertised price.

The bound volumes of the THE WRITER and THE AUTHOR for 1890 are now ready for delivery. A complete set of both magazines to the end of 1891—four bound volumes of THE WRITER, two bound volumes of THE AUTHOR, and a year's subscription to both magazines, ending with December, 1891—will be given for *Ten Dollars*. The number of sets available is limited, and those who desire to take advantage of this offer should do so without delay.

Friends of THE WRITER and THE AUTHOR will confer a favor if they will inquire at public

libraries whether complete sets of the two magazines are on file. Both magazines are educational in their character, and, being the only magazines in the world devoted solely to explaining the practical details of literary work, they should be found in every public library in the United States. The number of complete sets available is rapidly diminishing, and librarians will find it impossible to get complete files unless they order soon. *Unbound* sets can no longer be supplied.

## “THE WRITER” FOR MAY.

THE WRITER for May contains: “Skeletoons of Novels,” by Mary R. P. Hatch; “Plagiarism,” by Julia Schayer; “Honor among Publishers,” by Maude Meredith; “The Suburban Reporter’s Work,” by W. S. Nevins; “Studying the Dictionary,” by Robert Shore; “When to Write,” by Addie Archer; “A Poet of Canada” (“Seranus”), by M. Bourchier Sanford; “About Editors,” by D. M. Morrell; “Kansas as a Field for Fiction,” by May Belleville Brown; Editorial—“Newspaper Book Reviews”; and the usual departments, entitled “Queries”; “The Scrap Basket”; “The Use and Misuse of Words”; “Book Reviews”; “Literary Articles in Periodicals”; and “News and Notes.”

## THE WRITER’S ENVIRONMENT.

“It is a wonder to me,” said a well-known literary man who is now visiting in this city, “that unattached writers, that is, writers who can do their work at home, or anywhere else, not being obliged to go daily to offices, do not change their places of residence more frequently than they do. I make it a rule never to live in one country for more than a year. Last year I lived in South America. This year I live in New York, which is practically a country by itself, and next year I shall be in Mexico. After that I don’t know where I shall pitch my tents, and I don’t want to know, for I believe that it is a bad thing to plan too far ahead—it robs life of its novelty, which is one of its chief charms.

“Now, by leading the life of a nomad I keep from getting into a rut, the bane of a literary worker. I have a constant change of environment, meet many kinds of people, and gain experience of

many kinds of civilization, all of which gives me material for my literary endeavors. I depend largely upon my changes of environment for the color of my work. If I were to stay in one place all the time, I should stagnate, and my writings would take on a horribly monotonous tone. Indeed, lay it down as a dictum that the literary man ought to travel. If he does not, he is in great danger of becoming not only dull, but narrow, and narrowness is the worst vice that he could fall into.

"How, for example, can a man understand human nature, as deeply as a novelist should understand it, who has not seen it in all its many phases and under its many conditions? He ought to hob-nob with all classes of people and in all climes. He cannot expect to learn to know mankind from the attic window of a New York boarding-house. In fact, this is the trouble with many of our modern writers—they take superficial views of men and of life. They pride themselves on their 'intuition,' forgetful of the fact that intuition, when not disciplined and guided by knowledge, is a very deceitful quality."—*J. D. B.*, in the *New York Telegram*.

#### QUERIES.

[Readers of *THE AUTHOR* are invited to answer questions asked in this department. Replies should be brief and to the point, and they should always mention the number of the question answered.]

**No. 69.**—Can you help me to the sources of the following quotations: "An honest confession is good for the soul," and "That which is not for the interest of the whole swarm is not for the interest of a single bee"? I have exhausted the ordinary proverb and quotation books.

W. B.

TOPEKA, Kan.

#### PERSONAL GOSSIP ABOUT WRITERS.

**Cruger.**—Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger is a very beautiful woman, of rather more than the average height. She is taller than the Venus de Medici,—about the size of the Venus of Milo; and, as Heine said of Grisi, she has the arms which that statue has lost. Most noble are these fine arms; and the hands are large and well shaped, with each taper finger going off into pink, as if it had just crushed itself into a strawberry. The face is peculiar. The nose is "tip-tilted like the petal of a flower,"—the "nez Watteau,"—the lips red, and the teeth white and fresh as those of a young faun. Indeed, there is something like the faun in this original face.

The eyes are not free from a little tilt at the

outer corner, something remotely Japanese in shape; but the color of the iris is sea-green, the color of an aquamarine stone; her eyes have all the shifting lustre of the sea, at which she must have looked long and dreamily, making it a part of her being. From those strange eyes one gets the key-note of a wayward and commanding genius which sways the woman, perhaps against her will. Faun-like, much of the woods and streams is in the healthy nature of this woman, whose eloquent blood speaks in her cheeks, in her general pinkness, for her skin has a fine, healthy, roseate tint, as if she loved long walks, horseback-exercise, to row a boat, and to take cold baths. Her hair is profuse and curly, a dark brown; so she is neither blonde nor brunette,—rather what the French call *châtaigne*.

Mrs. Cruger lives delightfully in New York, her house full of Russian spoils and works of art, bear-skins on the floor, easy-chairs, musical instruments, heavy portières, and bright sunny boudoir, with wood fire, all the delightful confusion and well-regulated disorder of a woman's furnishing who has always had all that she wants.

So far as the world knows, Mrs. Cruger has never had a wish ungratified. She writes, therefore, as *Planchette* writes, because the spirit moves her, not to parry the keen bayonet of starvation, not to support family or friends; that has all been "done out" for her; and, therefore, the curiosity to see what she did write was very great, for we all acknowledge necessity to be the usual inspirer of good work.

The suddenness of her success can only be compared to that of "Jane Eyre," and those who criticise her playing with *edged tools* must remember what was said of that famous book. The British matron would have none of it, because Rochester was a "married man"; now it is a nursery classic. Mrs. Cruger has rushed with a free foot and a free lance into the kingdom of love, not minding much whether the men and women had other and more legal ties to bind their affections. "Mon légitime," as the emperor called his empress, is not always possessed of her rights in these dashing stories; hence some severe criticisms.—*Mrs. M. E. W. Sherwood*, in *May Lippincott's*.

**Field.**—A boy was born in St. Louis forty years ago, of old colonial stock, who grew up in New England and the West, and thus came to possess as a man many of the characteristics of the dwellers in both of these sections. While he was yet a little child his mother died, and he was placed in the care of his aunt, Miss Mary French, of Amherst, Mass. At seventeen years of age he entered Williams College.

His father, Roswell M. Field, a distinguished lawyer of St. Louis, who is perhaps best known as one of the counsel for Dred Scott in the famous slavery case, was a thorough scholar. He required the young student to carry on all correspondence with him in Latin. Before the son had been long at Williams College the father died. Professor John W. Burgess, who was appointed the boy's guardian, placed him in Knox College, at Galesburg, Ill. He studied there two years, and afterward remained for some time at the University of Missouri. In 1871, having attained his majority, Mr. Field went to Europe, where he travelled for six months. He became a newspaper reporter in 1873, being employed on the *St. Louis Evening Journal*, of which he soon was made city editor. He also worked on a newspaper in St. Joseph for several months, and later became managing editor of the *Kansas City Times*. About ten years ago he went to Denver as a member of the editorial staff of the *Tribune* of that city. There within a short time his writings gave him a wide reputation. In 1883 the *Chicago Daily News* secured his services, and ever since then he has been on the staff of that newspaper, with full liberty to write what he pleases. Tall, slender, boyish, blonde, and aggressive, this promising young man came out of the West eight years ago. During those years the growth of his powers has been continuous and rapid. Light-hearted and kindly, fond of friends, and yet a scholarly man, devoted to his family, and a little child among children, he has been learning lessons of his art in a variety of schools. His capacity for work is prodigious. A pen capable of making only the finest hair strokes, when once set to travelling over a pad of paper on his knee, within two hours supplies enough of his beautiful microscopic writing to fill a long newspaper column of agate type. Usually the sheets go to the printers without a blot or erasure. Yet Mr. Field's best productions are by no means hastily done. A poem or a story grows in his mind for days, and sometimes for weeks or months, before a word of it is written. Finally its turn comes, and then the whole is set down in all haste. Apparently, there is never a lack of subjects. The trouble lies mainly in the picking and choosing. Realizing that his ability to do good work is constantly increasing, Eugene Field has been slow to publish his stories and poems in book form. His late volumes were issued because not even their severest critic, the author of them, could help confessing that they deserved to see the light. They were first printed privately for distribution among his friends. In

the past he has declined advantageous offers from worthy publishers because he did not want the public to judge him by work which, no matter how satisfactory it might be to others, did not satisfy himself. Volumes bearing his name, however, have gone forth before, but rather in spite of him than by his wish. Mr. Field returned last fall from Europe, where he had spent more than a year with his family. He saw much of literary London, and received at its hands many kind attentions. There he renewed acquaintanceship with his talented classmate of Williams College, Isaac Henderson, the novelist. In London, also, he rummaged during many weeks for old books, old theatrical programmes, and curios of all sorts, finally departing heavily laden with spoil. Prominent among his foreign treasures is the well-worn axe of Mr. Gladstone, who presented it to him and received thanks in the shape of an epigram. — *Charles H. Dennis, in the Book Buyer.*

**Frederic.** — It is doubtful if any profession makes greater or more exhaustive demands upon one's time and energy than journalism. That Harold Frederic should have been able to find intervals of leisure while engaged in newspaper work to write during the past six or seven years three such novels as "Seth's Brother's Wife," "The Lawton Girl," and "In the Valley" indicates clearly the possession of a strong taste for literature and an ambitious determination to leave some record of his observations of life and character more carefully studied than is possible in ephemeral contributions to the newspaper with which he is connected. His first story, "Seth's Brother's Wife," was originally published as the initial serial in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1887, being followed, after an interval, by "In the Valley," an historical romance.

Mr. Frederic was born in Utica, N. Y., August 19, 1856, and grew to manhood amid the men and women whose portraits he has drawn with such vividness in two of his novels. His career illustrates how a youth with courage, character, ambition, and capacity can overcome every obstacle in his way, and win an honorable position for himself. When young Frederic was two years old, his father, who was in the railway service, was killed in an accident. The boy attended the common schools until he was twelve, when he went to work on a farm. Not relishing the life of a farmer, he drifted into one trade after another until he entered the service of a photographer. Here he remained several years, until he was compelled by failing eyesight to stop work entirely. This period of rest was the turning-point in Frederic's career. He

wrote a few stories and found his vocation. At the age of nineteen he became a reporter on the *Utica Observer*, and in three years he had been advanced to the position of editor of the paper. This responsible office he held for three years; and several of the characters and incidents of his first story, "Seth's Brother's Wife," revive the experiences of those days. Three years later, although a young man of only twenty-five, he was called to a still more responsible office, the editorship of the leading Republican newspaper of the state capital, the *Albany Journal*. When he had served two years in this capacity, Mr. Frederic was appointed European correspondent of the *New York Times*, with his headquarters in London, and this position he now holds. His letters by telegraph and mail to the *Times* form an interesting and valuable series of reviews of foreign topics.

Among his friends Mr. Frederic is an agreeable and genial companion. His wide acquaintance with men and affairs makes his talk interesting; and his abundant spirits, his force of character, and his quiet sense of humor make themselves constantly felt among those who know him.—*The Book Buyer for May*.

**Johnston.**—A correspondent, Thed Pershing, sends from Shamokin, Penn., to the *New York Evening Post* an interesting letter, from which we take the following account of the way in which the late Professor Alexander Johnston, of Princeton, came to write the first of his series of historical books: He had moved to Norwalk, Conn., where he was conducting a private school. Calling one evening on the lady whom he afterward married, a number of common friends dropped in, and during the conversation which ensued a question concerning some phase of American history was asked, which, at the time, struck Professor Johnston as showing deplorable ignorance. Throughout the following week he kept turning the matter over in his mind, trying to decide what book he could send his friend to for light. But the more he reflected the more clearly did he realize that in no place outside the walls of a large reference library could the information be found. It occurred to him that here was a gap in American political history that needed filling, and he started at once to write his well-known "American Politics." He offered the manuscript to a publisher, and received it again with the usual regrets. He worked it over, and sent it out once more with the same result. It is the same old story. The manuscript went to a dozen houses, and invariably came back. Professor Johnston, believing that the publishers knew the

market, changed, retouched, and strengthened his work every time, and at last Henry Holt & Co. accepted and published it.

The first copy which he received he gave to Mrs. Johnston. The second went to Mr. Godkin, the editor of the *Nation*, with a note stating that the author had received a great amount of his political education from the columns of that paper, and asking its editor to accept the little book as an evidence of his appreciation. This must certainly have gratified Mr. Godkin no less than did his answer please and surprise Professor Johnston. For with his thanks the editor sent the information that he had seen the "History of American Politics" before; that, in fact, Mr. Holt had given him the manuscript to secure his opinion of its merits, and he had taken great pleasure in advising its publication. The book at once took its place as a standard, and has gone through many editions.

**Metcalf.**—Dr. Loretus Metcalf has retired from active connection with the *Forum*, which he founded five years ago. Mr. Metcalf began magazine work on the *North American Review*, when the *Review* was bought by Mr. Rice, and removed from Boston to New York some fifteen years ago. Before that he had had long years of experience on various weekly publications in and near Boston. He was born in Maine in 1837, and has always kept a country home there, doing his editorial work for three months each summer at his country place. He is not a college man, his youthful studies having been directed by tutors, and his later acquirements having resulted from constant reading and travel. Bates College conferred the degree of A. M. upon him, and Iowa College has made him an LL. D. Allan Forman recently said of him in the *Journalist*: "Mr. Metcalf is an untiring worker, and attributes to this quality such measure of success as has followed his efforts. While engaged on newspapers he was accustomed ordinarily to give as much as sixteen hours a day to labor, and during his connection with the *North American Review* the usual length of his working day was fourteen or fifteen hours. The routine editorial work of the *Forum* is conducted by him with such system that it moves with the precision of clock-work."

The reading public for the most part are impressed with the idea that the work of a magazine editor is one of luxury and ease. In order to afford some glimpses of the reality, the *Review of Reviews* makes public some notes of a very recent conversation with this veteran, who has literally worn himself out in the task of creating a world-famed periodical. "For fifteen years," said Mr. Metcalf,

## THE AUTHOR.

"I have been engaged without rest in the work of reading essays. I am now, I believe, the veteran magazine editor of this country, and for that matter of England as well, having served longer than any of my contemporaries continuously in this line of work. For the past five years or more I have had scarcely a single day's relief or recreation, and I find myself worn out and ready to turn the work over to younger hands and fresher minds."

Mr. Metcalf expressed his entire willingness to give some information and opinions about review-editing in this country as the result of his experience. "Upon the *North American Review*," he said, "under the proprietorship of the late Allen Thordyke Rice, I had the full and responsible editorship. My arrangement with Mr. Rice gave me entire liberty, and made me wholly responsible for what went into the *Review*. But I knew that there was a certain preference for articles which tended to the sensational, and I allowed myself to be considerably influenced by Mr. Rice's undoubted belief in the practical business advantage of such contributions.

"When, in 1885, I left the *North American Review* and organized the Forum Company, it was with absolute freedom to make the *Forum* just such a periodical as I desired. You will observe that we have constantly followed the principle that the *Forum* was to be constructive, not destructive; that its object was to further the best causes of the day; and that its space was not to be occupied by men who were working merely to tear down religious, social, or political fabrics and standards. But let me say now that I have never made a number of the *Forum* as good, or anywhere near as good, as I could have made it or as I wanted to make it. I have gone upon the plan of publishing three or four articles in a given number which I regarded as finished, and important essays, and as real contributions to the thought and literature of the time. These might be articles by great thinkers or specialists upon the educational, theological, economic, scientific, or social problems of the day. Then I have felt it expedient to fill up the number with articles of a more practical, commonplace sort, which would appeal to the ordinary reader, cause newspaper discussion, and make the magazine sell. If I could have shaped the *Forum* to correspond with my own ideal, it would have been impossible to keep it in the field. This fact has frequently discouraged me, but I have never been oblivious to it. In England," continued Mr. Metcalf, "the public is of a different sort. The *Nineteenth Century*, the *Contemporary*, and the *Fortnightly* are

able to appear month after month with something like complete numbers, each article being, upon the whole, such an article as I should deem worthy of publication in a dignified, standard periodical. There would seem to be in England a larger element than in America of people interested in a high quality of periodical essay-writing. The exigencies are such in this country that I have even been obliged to decline and send back some of the very best articles that have been submitted to me. A case in point occurred only last week, when I returned an article by one of the most distinguished men of modern times." In response to the question what proportion of the articles he actually printed were articles which were submitted as volunteer contributions, Mr. Metcalf's reply was very interesting. "I have been receiving and reading from two thousand to three thousand volunteer manuscripts a year, and out of that entire number I have accepted and published perhaps twelve, that is to say, an average of one article in each number of the magazine. More than nine-tenths of the articles which appear are articles that are written at the instance of the editor. We decide upon the subjects which we believe ought to be treated, and then we endeavor to select the best men in the whole world to write us the articles upon those subjects. There is absolutely no standard as to the price paid. The lowest price we have ever paid has been ten dollars for a thousand words. In one of our average ten-page articles there are some 3,500 or 4,000 words. Sometimes we pay from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for 3,000 words. It is by no means the men whose articles are the most valuable who receive the most money, and my ideal magazine would be no more expensive to produce — even less expensive, perhaps, to produce — than the numbers of the *Forum* which have ordinarily appeared. But what would meet my ideal would be in danger of falling flat and dead upon the market. The men whose work commands a high price are often men of affairs, eminent politicians, or distinguished lawyers. They are men whose time is occupied, or men who have no particular literary ambition and whose time is exceedingly valuable in their regular pursuits, so that it is necessary to pay a large fee in order to induce them to sit down and write the article desired."

At Mr. Metcalf's instance, Mr. Walter H. Page, who has for three years filled the position of business manager of the *Forum*, has been chosen editor. Mr. Page is a young man, of college training, literary aptitudes, and decided executive ability, who is of North Carolina origin, and who had served a journalistic apprenticeship upon the New York

*Evening Post* before undertaking the business control of the periodical that he is henceforth to edit. He may safely follow in the general line of policy that has in five years brought the *Forum* to so commanding a position among periodical publications and to so strong a place as regards influence with the serious elements of the community.

**Smiles.** — I have just come across a copy of Dr. Smiles' earliest work, bearing an interesting autograph inscription from the pen of the author. Everybody must have heard of Dr. Smiles and of his "Self-Help," "Character," and similar works. He is one of the oldest and one of the most popular of living writers. Born nearly eighty years ago, he commenced life as a surgeon, but soon abandoned the medical profession for that of a journalist. He edited the *Leeds Times* for several years, after which he identified himself closely with railways and with the railway movement which marked the opening years of Her Majesty's reign. As secretary of the Leeds and Thirsk Railway, he came into contact with the Stephensons. The result was "The Life of George Stephenson," which was first published in 1857, and which proved a great success. Numerous works of the same kind have from time to time appeared under his name. His latest contribution to literature is the "Memoir of John Murray," of which everybody is just now talking. Dr. Smiles, in a recent interview, said of the many translations of his "Self-Help": "French, Germans, and Russians know it well. The Turks have not used it at all. I have seen copies of it in several of the Indian dialects. The Italians have made more of it; however, than any nation on earth, I think, as I continue to receive the most enthusiastic letters from the young men in that lovely country. Indeed, I once had a great compliment paid me by a large body representative of the best Italian culture. 'You have done more to make Italy than Cavour or Garibaldi ever did. Come and see.' And I went. I often go now. Last year, when in Rome, the Italian press, under the presidency of Signor Bonghi, gave me a great reception, and at the banquet in the evening the minister of finance said: 'I have had my children educated by reading your books.' In a remote little village I was one day with a party of friends admiring the carving in the village church, when the priest came up and thanked me warmly for the books of mine he had read — 'Self-Help,' 'Character,' and 'Thrift.' I believe 80,000 copies of my book have been sold in Italy, which is a great thing, as comparatively few of the people

read. It is sold at 1 f. a copy." — *London Letter in the New York Press.*

**Tynan.** — One of the brightest and most promising of young women journalists is Miss Katharine Tynan, whose prose and verse have been widely read and admired, not only in her own country, but through the media of the *Boston Pilot*, the *Catholic World*, and other American periodicals. Miss Tynan's style is sympathetic, sensitive, and picturesque. She is a young Irishwoman, in easy circumstances. Her father's residence is in a suburb of Dublin, and is very picturesque and pretty. She made her first success in 1885, with a little volume of poems, "Louise de la Vallière and Other Poems." It went through several editions, was widely circulated both in England and America, and brought Miss Tynan into friendship with the Rossettis and other London literary people. Her second collection of poems, "Shamrocks," was brought out in 1887, dedicated to Christina and William Rosetti. She writes well in prose, and is a contributor to many of the best English and American publications. She is a Roman Catholic; has written much and well about the Irish Parliamentary party and the English Liberal statesmen; has many friends at Oxford, goes a good deal into society, and is altogether a very brilliant and resourceful young person. E. A. T.

#### LITERARY NEWS AND NOTES.

Percival & Co., London, have nearly ready a volume of "Essays on French Novelists," by George Saintsbury. Besides an introductory essay on "The Present State of the French Novel," the authors dealt with are Anthony Hamilton, Alain René Lesage, Charles de Bernard, Alexandre Dumas, Théophile Gautier, Jules Sandeau, Octave Feuillet, Gustave Flaubert, Henry Murger, and Victor Cherbuliez.

Miss Sara Jeanette Duncan is a Canadian by birth. Her first writing was done for the *Toronto Globe*, her pen name being "Gaith Grafton."

It is said that "Lanoe Falconer," author of "Mademoiselle Ixe," is Miss Mary Hawker, whose name has long been familiar to readers in England as a writer of short stories.

A volume of essays, entitled "Criticism and Fiction," by William Dean Howells, including many of the best things that he has said from time to time in the "Editor's Study" of *Harper's Magazine*, is announced for publication by Harper & Brothers.

For many years graceful and tender verses by "Alice Chadbourne" have appeared in Maine papers and in other periodicals. Recently a volume of these poems has been published bearing the title "Poems from Yare." The real name of the author is Augusta C. Davis, and she resides in Yarmouth, Me. For the last three years she has been quite blind. Her only living relative is a brother, with whom she resides.

James Payn, says Joseph Hatton, writes novels very much as Trollope wrote. Trollope got up early and composed many pages before breakfast, and knew to the minute how many thousand words he had written. Payn is the literary adviser of a great publishing house. He goes to the office of the firm, writes his current novel until luncheon, then plays a game at whist, returns to the office and does his literary advising, then goes home to dinner and bed. He does his work in the heart of London.

The initial chapters of "The Three Fates," F. Marion Crawford's new novel, form the great feature of the May number of the *Home-Maker*. The story is of a young journalist, and the scenes are laid in New York.

O. C. Auringer, whose poem, "Scythe and Sword," received high praise from the leading critics, has just issued through D. Lothrop Co. a long poem of action and endeavor, "The Heart of the Golden Roan." The poem first appeared in the *Springfield Republican*. Mr. Auringer is a member of the Authors' Club and is a resident clergyman of Northwood, N. Y.

Charles E. L. Wingate, dramatic editor of the *Boston Journal*, has become the Boston correspondent of the *Critic*, continuing the series of weekly letters so long contributed by the late Alexander Young.

To publish one's own books has been thought to be a very foolish and unremunerative plan—especially by publishers. It was supposed to be an exceedingly impractical thing for Mr. Ruskin to bring out editions of his works; yet it appears that his profits are growing every year, and that from one book alone—the new edition of his "Modern Painters"—the profit will be not less than \$30,000.

James Whitcomb Riley has gone to Europe.

Mr. Gladstone writes that he is not prepared to say what steps should be taken in the matter of the American Copyright act, but whether in relation to the interests of labor, the dignity of authorship, or the nation's interests, he regards the act as highly unsatisfactory.

Miss Grace Carew Sheldon, the author of that bright book of travel, "As We Saw it in '90," is the eldest daughter of the late Judge James Sheldon, of Buffalo. She has made a success, not only as a correspondent and author, but as organizer and manager of the Buffalo Woman's Exchange, an institution in Buffalo which has already done much good in aiding women to dispose of their work.

Mrs. Burton Harrison, the author, has sailed for Europe. She will pay a brief visit to the continent, but will spend the summer chiefly in England.

Ormand G. Smith, manager of one of New York's sensational weeklies, is reported as saying to a *New York News* reporter: "We have \$100,000 worth of manuscript on hand that has been paid for, and we will not accept any more at present, unless it is of unusual merit. We always read manuscript that is sent to us, but it is rarely that any is accepted. We have our own writers, to whom we suggest plots and leave them to elaborate them. For detective stories we do not pay so much as for love stories, which must contain more or less of facts. There must be a certain air of probability about a love story, you know, while you can put almost anything into a detective story. We find that stories have to appeal to the masses, and represent scenes from every-day life. 'What do we pay for our stories?' Well, for a detective story of 80,000 words, \$200. That is for good work, of course. We keep a big scrap-book, and when the newspapers print a story about a crime of any special interest, it is clipped and goes into the book. These clippings are worked over by our writers into detective stories. In regard to the love stories, or novels having love as the central element of interest, we often give to our writers the plot and the chapter headings, as well as the title, but ask them to make any suggestion that will be improvements on those of our editors. We have half a dozen writers who cannot fill our orders for love stories, and yet it is difficult to get new men who would be satisfactory to us. We pay as high as \$500 for a good love story of 80,000 words. Some of our writers can turn out such a story in a week, or again it may take two weeks, and then again, a longer time. The writer we pay \$500 to writes three of them a year, but he is also employed by us on other work."

Every reader of THE AUTHOR is directly interested in the copyright laws of the United States, a complete reprint of which is included in the magazine this month. It has been prepared with great care by the F. H. Gilson Company, printers and bookbinders, of Boston, and will be found useful for convenient references.